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## I. PROJECT TITLE: EXPLOITING POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DATA

Submitting Agency: CIA

## II. COSTS (in thousands): FY83 FY84 FY85

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## III. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

## A. Statement of need:

Intelligence analysis is often constrained by limitations in readily available data. To the degree that information is difficult to identify and manipulate, it will not be incorporated in intelligence production. In practice, this has meant that a vast array of political and social information--on public opinion, social trends, and domestic conflict--has remained largely untapped by NFAC analysts. When analysts assess political and social conditions, such as the potential for political instability, the effectiveness of foreign government policies, or support for its foreign policy, they, therefore, often rely on incomplete information.

This situation calls for the creation of a unique intelligence resource: a data archive of important political and social information and the means for analysts to easily use this information in their everyday work. Creation of such an archive would involve systematic purchase of political and social data from social science data archives, foreign public opinion polling firms, and foreign government sources on a worldwide basis. To make these data readily accessible by analysts, an extensive interactive computer software system would need to be developed. The result would be an archive more extensive and timely than any that currently exists in either the public or private sector; one with sophisticated retrieval and analysis capabilities that would significantly enhance the depth and quality of NFAC analysis.

## B. Current status:

The Intelligence Community is embarking upon an extensive effort to upgrade its capabilities to monitor socioeconomic trends in foreign countries through increased use of external data bases, such as those of the Bureau of the Census, and by more intensive analysis of these data. This is a vital effort. To make the linkage between socioeconomic trends and political events, we need an in-house capability to store, retrieve, and analyse these bodies of data together. For example, the historical relationship between inflation rates and a leader's popularity or the incidence of domestic protest could be quickly measured statistically and graphically. More complex models would lead to forecasts of stability within a country.

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OPA is collecting and computerizing political and social data that will facilitate interpretation of economic, demographic, and electoral trends by NFAC analysts. At present, the OPA Political and Social Data Archive contains approximately 200 data files and we have identified approximately 400 firms conducting public opinion polls in more than 60 countries from whom surveys might be purchased.

The rapidly-increasing availability of information in computerized formats, the development of analytic aids through ORD's Intelligence Production Laboratory project, and the increased availability to NFAC analysts of remote terminals and sophisticated graphic systems make a thorough and systematic exploitation of political and social data possible.

C. What is required:

External research funds will be used to hire outside contractors to complete three basic tasks:

1) Development of a computer software system that will allow analysts to query data on their country or issue and conduct simple statistical analyses. This would involve interfacing with computer packages -- including graphics support -- already available on the Agency's computer system or currently under development. The system would permit the analyst to specify a country, region, or issue and receive at the terminal an inventory of available archive data by time period. The analyst would make choices, receive results, process data statistically or graphically, save files, and otherwise manipulate the data interactively. By making the full range of information readily available and easily usable its full benefit will be realized. It is estimated that development of this software will cost \$1 million over the first two years.

2) Collection and processing of approximately 1,200 public opinion polls. This support is necessary because poll data are frequently in formats incompatible with the Agency's computer systems. Estimated cost is [REDACTED]

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3) Transcription of socioeconomic data and election returns from published documents to computerized formats and coding of politically relevant events, such as acts of terrorism, insurgency and government reprisal within countries. Estimated cost of these activities is [REDACTED]

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D. Implementation and timing:

These tasks will not be implemented by the same contractor. OPA will have overall responsibility, with the computer software development done in consultation with ODP. It is assumed that major portions of that work will have to be contracted out. External contractors are the most appropriate means for the massive data collection and preparation effort. Once the historical baseline has been developed, the archive will be updated and maintained in-house,

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supplemented by a minor investment of office external analysis funds when required.

With the funding of this project, OPA will conduct an ADP requirements study during FY82 and locate, through competitive bidding, contractors able to perform the related tasks, so that there would be no delay in getting started in FY83.

#### IV. INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY APPLICABILITY:

The archive will constitute a unique resource within the Intelligence Community that will be used by NFAC analysts but could also support requests from DIA and State. The computer-based system will be developed with the flexibility to permit additional data bases to be added to the system in the future.

#### V. INTELLIGENCE CONSUMER BENEFITS:

The development of the archive is fundamental to the efforts to improve the quality of analysis in NFAC. It clearly will upgrade the accuracy and timeliness of political reporting on an ever increasing number of countries.

#### VI. PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS:

There are no known technical or administrative obstacles to the development of this system. It will be, however, large and complex and we anticipate that a significant amount of time would be needed to familiarize analysts with its capabilities and use.

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